

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The 287(g) Program at Work

FPD Murder Suspect Identified as in the U.S. Illegally

FREDERICK, Md. (April 20, 2021) – On Monday, April 19, **Santos Margarito Turcios Benitez**, a suspect in the July 2020 murder of then 37-year-old **Kelly Nicole Serra**, was extradited from New York to the Frederick County Adult Detention Center (FCADC) to face charges for this crime. As part of the inmate intake process, certified and trained FCADC 287(g) officers screen each individual and through this process it was determined Benitez was in the United States illegally.

The FCADC 287(g) trained officer relayed this information to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) 287(g) program manager for Frederick County, who then lodged an immigration detainer against Benitez. Benitez will first have to adjudicate all of his local charges and once he does ICE will serve him his immigration paperwork, followed by official immigration proceedings for deportation.

"This is exactly how the 287(g) process was meant to work and if he is found guilty of that murder and serves his time, this individual will be deported back to his home country and out of the United States," said FCSO Sheriff Chuck Jenkins. "This is the 21st person we have encountered through the 287(g) program here in Frederick County that was charged with murder or attempted murder.

"This proves this program works and helps keep hardened criminals off our streets and out of our county, state, and country. This was not a routine traffic stop, this was not an event in which our deputies were out looking for illegal immigrants, which we are often accused of doing but never do, and this was not a targeted event. This is how the 287(g) process works here in Frederick County and throughout the nation and again I stand behind this proven process."

In 2008, Jenkins entered into a partnership with the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs office to begin the 287(g) Criminal Alien Program within the Sheriff's Office. This partnership entailed training office personnel from FCADC and FCSO Law Enforcement operations to identify and begin deportation proceedings against illegal aliens committing crimes within Frederick County.

Sixteen correctional officers and 10 law enforcement deputies initially completed training in early 2008, and the program officially started in Frederick County on April 11, 2008. The Task Force Model of law enforcement deputies conducting the 287(g) program discontinued in 2012, but the FCADC 287(g) program continues to this day with 17 trained 287(g) correctional officers.

The Frederick County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) is a full-service law enforcement agency; an arm of the court, and a keeper of offenders. In this regard, it exists to serve the more than 250,000 citizens of Frederick County with respect, fairness, and compassion. FCSO is committed to the prevention of crime; the protection of life and property; the preservation of peace and order; the enforcement of laws and ordinances; the safeguarding of constitutional guarantees; and safekeeping of prisoners. The men,

women, and officers of this office nurture public trust by holding themselves to the highest standards of performance and ethics. The FCSO is located at 110 Airport Drive East, Frederick, MD, 21701. Visit www.frederickcosherriff.com for more information.

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